



News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal
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VISIT OUR WEBSITE: "www.dps.state.la.us/sfm/"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRE CODE REQUIREMENTS – "HALLOWEEN HAUNTED HOUSES"

BATON ROUGE – With the Fall holiday season rapidly approaching, many organizations and individuals are in the pre-planning stages for holiday activities. In order to assist in Halloween planning, The State Fire Marshal's Office announced today that the following requirements must be met to provide adequate fire protection in **"Haunted Houses"** to help ensure a fire-safe Halloween season.

On July 1, 2003, the State of Louisiana adopted the 2003 edition of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101, which is known as the "Life Safety Code," and is the standard that this state has adopted as the minimum acceptable fire and life safety codes since 1975. This edition of the "Life Safety Code" has special provisions for **"Special Amusement Buildings,"** which include **"HAUNTED HOUSES."**

The NFPA 101 Life Safety Code requires the following fire safety procedures for legally acceptable **PERMANENT** "haunted house" or "special amusement" displays:

1. Protection throughout by an approved, supervised, automatic sprinkler system...where the building is movable or portable, sprinkler water supply may be approved temporary means.
2. Where the nature of the special amusement building is such that it operates in reduced lighting levels, the building shall be protected by an approved automatic smoke detection system, which upon activation shall sound an alarm at a constantly attended location.
3. Actuation of the sprinkler system or smoke detection system shall automatically increase the illumination in the means of egress, and shall stop conflicting or confusing sounds and visual effects.
4. In addition to normal exit markings, low level exit signs shall also be provided. In mobile buildings, exit signs shall be of luminescent, self-luminous, or electroluminescent type.
5. Where mazes, mirrors, or other designs are used to confound the egress path, approved directional exit marking that will become apparent in an emergency shall be provided.
6. Interior finish shall be Class A and all decorations shall be flame resistant.

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Meeting all the above requirements would make the custom of Halloween Carnivals and Haunted Houses cost-prohibitive in most cases Therefore, The State Fire Marshal's Office will allow the following variances to NFPA 101 for TEMPORARY "Special Amusement Buildings:"

1. Interior Finish in the building or structure shall be **Class A**, and all decorations and props shall be fire resistant.
2. Where low lighting levels are used, a **smoke detection system** shall be provided that will:
 - A. Sound an alarm that is audible above the greatest ambient noise level during the festivities.
 - B. The smoke detection systems shall sound at a **constantly manned location**, where the attendant will be capable of switching on additional lighting for emergency evacuation.
3. A method shall be provided to control the **occupant load to no more than 25** occupants at a time.
4. A fire department engine or mini-pumper and personnel shall be provided on the scene during all periods of activity. *

* **However**, due to the difficulties associated with having fire department personnel and equipment on scene at all times, the following **alternative will be allowed**:

A. **ABC type portable fire extinguishers** must be placed in each room or area with a person trained in the proper use of extinguishers at each extinguisher location in the facility.

B. **And, a garden hose that is tied into an adequate water supply** source and that is long enough to reach into each room or area of the haunted house must be provided.

5. **Exit and directional signs** shall be provided as necessary to make the egress path obvious.

6. Artificial smoke is **PROHIBITED** as it will cause problems with the proper function of the smoke detection systems.*

* **Please note that "dry ice"** may be used to produce smoke effects, as this will not interfere with the proper functioning of the smoke detection system.

7. A sketch of the building or facility, along with documentation on materials, emergency plans and equipment that will be used in the Halloween festivities and/or haunted house **must be submitted** to the local fire department Fire Prevention bureau. If the local fire department does not have a Fire Prevention bureau, the plans and documentation **must be submitted** to the nearest district office of the Office of the State Fire Marshal for review and approval prior to use of buildings or spaces for temporary "Special Amusement" activities.

Should anyone have any questions about these requirements, they should direct their calls to their local fire prevention bureau or the nearest District Office of the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The phone numbers and contact persons of the District Offices of the State Fire Marshal are as follows:

Baton Rouge Area:

Dean Guidry, Supervisor
225-925-3650 OR 800-256-5452 (Toll Free)

Lafayette Area:

Lance Carruth, Supervisor
337-886-1273 OR 800-554-0006 (Toll Free)

New Orleans Area:

Nunzio Marchiafava, Supervisor
504-219-4600 OR 888-634-7689 (Toll Free)

Shreveport Area

W. K. Matlock, Supervisor
318-676-7145 OR 888-634-7682 (Toll Free)

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